

# The Gothic Dynasty

The end of the fourth century saw the Northern tribes besieging the Roman forces with a fury that nothing could withstand, and at the same time countless hordes of Tartars were swarming over the Eastern border, and driving even the Goths before them. These up and down, paws upon the Goths secured permission from the Roman Emperor Valens to settle in the vacant lands of Thrace, but soon they had grown so strong they attacked the Roman forces and killed Valens himself. The young son of Valens, being too indolent to rule, turned the real power over to Theodosius, one of the most renowned Christian

the feeble hand of Rome, till only Italy was left to the sway of him who bore the name of Emperor.

On the East the Huns, led by Attila, "The Scourge of God," he has been called, ravaged and laid waste, again capturing Rome, and securing as bride the sister of the emperor. But his death occurred on the night of his nuptials.

Next Genseric entered the Tiber with a large fleet, and for fourteen days the pillage of Rome went on, and the Daughters were borne in triumph to the African harems of the Vandals, while the men went as hewers of wood and drawers of



generals of the time. He kept the empire intact for sixteen years when he finally assumed power for a brief period before his death.

The Barbarians under Alaric swept over much of the Western Empire, and a few months later, another horde, under Ragdasi, appeared before the walls of the Imperial city, that had stood for six hundred years with no foreign foe before her gates. The people were weakened by degeneracy, and only the walls stood in their native strength, but Alaric, with one hundred thousand Northmen, forty thousand Roman slaves, white men and women, saw their opportunity to join with the barbarians, and at midnight the Seven-hilled city received to herself the divine retribution,

water.

After some years of blood and destruction, even the title of Emperor was no longer borne, but in its place, Boadacer made himself King of Italy. He conferred upon his captains the titles of duke and count, thus establishing the beginning of the feudal system. The army was composed of barbarians and slaves cultivated the fields. The Caesars had departed forever and the dynasty of the Goth had commenced its reign.

The masters blended so completely with the people whom they conquered that soon there was no distinction of nationality. But Italy was too rich a prize for the Ostrogoths to resist and after fourteen years,



drinking to the dregs the fate she had bestowed upon hundreds of other cities. The slaves, learned in all manner of lusts and vices from their masters, made an effort to avenge on man and maid the accumulated oppression of ages, the barbarians held the daughters of Roman Senators as ministers to their desire, while the blackness of night brooded for four years over the fair Italian plain. Then the death of Alaric, and the succession of his brother made it possible for Roman ascendancy to be restored in name at least, for Adolphus became a Roman general and held sway over the whole northern empire till his death. Then the provinces dropped off, permitted by

it yielded to Theodoric, and for thirty-seven years he ruled Italy with a power and justice unknown for ages. Then again weak successors left the land to the power of the Emperor of the Eastern Empire. But only for a short time, as again a general of the Goths led his legions into Rome. After a few months however, Justinian led a picked army from the Eastern Empire, and in one of the hardest fights of the ages, the Goths were cut to pieces and most of them destroyed, thus ending the Gothic Dynasty, having ruled for more than a century, and Italy was given over to a long period of petty warfare, where all that had ever been glorious faded from her memory.

## THE LEGEND OF GOLDBERG.

(By Stanley Waterloo.)  
Still and ghastly in the moonlight  
Lay the German village brown,  
But appeared no human figure,  
For the Plague was in the town.

There had corpses lain unburied,  
And whom death had chanced to spare  
Were all hidden in the houses  
From the pestilential air.

So, in sorrow, had they hidden,  
Dreading night, afraid of day,  
Praying, waiting, scarcely hoping  
For the Dread to pass away.

Came the snow, then the morning  
sunshine,  
Came the Christmas as of old,  
But no form moved in the village:  
It lay silent, white and cold.

Rose that morn the singer Caspar,  
From the bed where he had lain.  
(He alone of all the stricken  
From his bed might rise again.)

"I alone," he thought, "am living!  
I alone!"—his eyes grew dim—  
"I alone, of all the village,  
May repeat the Christmas hymn!"

"What though death may be awaiting?  
—What is death!—the day is bright  
I will sing the Christ Child's story—  
Sing it looking on the light!"

Open then he threw the shutter  
And upon the silent street,  
From his lips rang out the anthem,  
Strong and hopeful, clear and sweet.

Through the frosty air of morning  
The old Christmas anthem rang—  
What was that? Another shutter  
Opened wide as Caspar sang!

And another, and another!  
There was limit to the strain—  
God he thanked! A score of voices  
Joined with Caspar in the strain!

And they knew no more were dying,  
That the hand with power to stay  
Had been reached out to deliver—  
This they knew on Christmas Day.

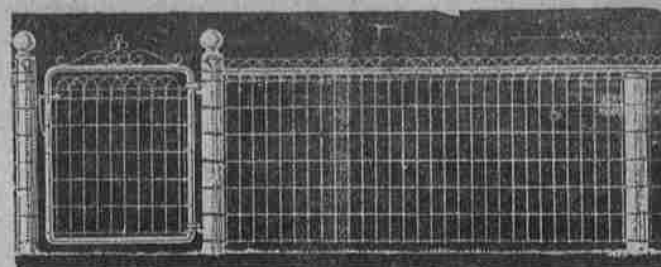
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